(iii) installation of additional Electrostatic Precipitator in the Sinter Plant and the Captive Power Plant etc.

Shortage of steel SCRAP

3454. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of ministeel plants are facing closure due to shortage of steel scrap;

(b) whether the crisis is likely to lead to a steep fall in production of steel in the country;

(c) the number of mini-steel plants working less than their capacity; and

(d) what steps Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) It is not a fact that a large number of ministeel plants are facing closure due to the shortage of steel scrap. However, production of ministeel plants is likely to be adversely affected due to the shortage of steel scrap.

(c) Information regarding the number of ministeel plants working less than the capacity is not readily available. However, the average capacity utilisation of the ministeel plants is expected to be less than in the previous year.

(d) Import of steel melting scrap through the canalising agency, Metal Scrap Trade Corporation (MSTC), has reduced this year due to non-availability of adequate free foreign exchange. Efforts are being made to increase import of scrap through MSTC. The ministeel plants can also make imports directly through the use of Exim Scrips.

Decontrol of Steel prices

3455. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:
SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to decontrol the steel prices shortly as a part of the economic liberalisation package;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is likely to cover all steel items; and

(d) if the reply to part (a) above be in the affirmative, the steps Government propose to take to assess the work-load of the Iron and Steel Controller's Organisation and economise expenditure thereon by pruning the manpower employed there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (c) The matter is receiving Government's attention.

(d) The functions and the work of the Office of Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel are under periodic review.

SC/ST officials in SAIL

3456. SHRI SUSHIL BARONGPA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in Corporate Office and Central Marketing Organisation of Steel Authority of India Limited, Officers belonging to general